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HOLIDAY PICK-ME-UP

58 temporary cab licences up for approval

metroNEWS

EMILY JACKSON/METRO

Trump name to remain on new tower

CONTROVERSY

Developer ignores calls to take name off of building

Emily Jackson
Metro | Vancouver

A Vancouver developer will not heed public calls to dump Donald Trump's name from its swanky new downtown tower, despite one councillor calling it a "beacon of racism."

Former city planner Brent Toderian started the calls to remove the Trump brand from Holborn's 63-storey tower on West Georgia in between Bute and Thurlow streets after Trump suggested banning all Muslims from the entering the United States earlier this week.

Coun. Kerry Jang joined Toderian, personally asking the developer to reconsider the name via text message on Tuesday.

But Holborn apparently has no plans to change the name because it doesn't want to get involved in politics, according to an emailed statement attributed to CEO Joo Kim Tiah on Wednesday.

"Holborn is a Vancouver-based private real estate development company that owns Trump Vancouver. When Trump Vancouver opens in 2016, we will create as many as 300 jobs," Tiah said.

"Holborn, a company that has contributed immensely to the growth of Vancouver, is not in any way involved in U.S. politics. As such, we would not comment further on Mr. Trump's personal or political agenda, nor any political issues, local or foreign.

"Our efforts remain focused on the construction of what will soon be the finest luxury property in Vancouver and beyond."

Holborn had no further comment when asked to clarify what the statement means for the future of the Trump brand in Vancouver.

For his part, Toderian has said Vancouver's urban brand is not compatible with that of Trump.

METROPOLIS AT METROTOWN

swatch

metro NEWS
Your essential daily news

Decorations relations: Canadian Tire and Walmart in light fight over clip-ons. **Business**

Premier humbled by critical issues despite strong economy

POLITICS

Protecting kids in care, transparency dog province

British Columbians can expect financial benefits in the coming year thanks to the strongest performing economy in Canada, Premier Christy Clark said Wednesday.

In a year-end interview with The Canadian Press, Clark said the government expects money will be available to consider options including tax cuts, debt reductions, infrastructure projects and more support for the beleaguered Children's Ministry.

Despite a strong economic performance this year, Clark said she's been humbled by difficult issues involving the protection of children in care and criticism by the privacy commissioner about the government's practice of deleting potentially sensitive emails.

The financial dividend does not signal her government is about to embark on a pre-election spending spree, but there is some added financial room.

"We have a chance to start making decisions about how we want to invest those dividends for people," Clark said. "There are a lot of things we are now able to do that we weren't necessarily able to do three years ago because we were in such rough financial shape."

Premier Christy Clark says her government has an opportunity to start making decisions about how it would like to spend its dividends to benefit British Columbians. CHAD HIPOLITO/THE CANADIAN PRESS

The Conference Board of Canada predicted this week B.C. will lead the country in economic growth this year and in 2016. The board forecast 3.1 per cent economic growth for the province in 2015 and another 3.6 per cent next year.

One of the primary goals of Clark's job plan, which she introduced in September 2011 shortly after becoming premier, was putting B.C. among the top provinces in Canada in economic growth by 2015.

The B.C. government's most recent financial update forecast two per cent economic growth this year and a budget surplus of $265 million.

Clark said she expected to see more spending for child and youth mental health, the Ministry of Children and Families, transit and to support small business.

The premier — whose Liberals are seeking their fifth consecutive mandate in May 2017 — would not discuss the amount of money the province believes it can spend.

"But what you will see is a dividend being returned to British Columbians," she said. "That can come in many forms. A dividend in terms of debt reduction, that's one thing we can do."

Prior to the 2013 election campaign, Clark announced the creation of a prosperity fund that would accumulate revenues from the liquefied natural gas industry. She said the fund would be used to eliminate B.C.'s debt, currently at more than $60 billion.

The care of vulnerable children and the government's management of potentially sensitive information were nagging issues for her Liberal government.

B.C.'s Privacy Commissioner Elizabeth Denham issued a stinging report that made public the government's practice of deleting emails connected to freedom-of-information requests. The report highlighted negligent record searches, failures to document searches and the wilful destruction of records in response to queries.

The issue arose when a whistle-blower said his supervisor in the Transportation Ministry deleted emails from his computer about the investigation into murdered and missing women along the so-called Highway of Tears.

Clark ordered her cabinet ministers and all political staff to save their emails.

Clark said she expects a report next week from former B.C. privacy commissioner David Loukidelis to recommend modern approaches to the way the government manages information.

"We got caught on the wrong side," said Clark. "We fell behind ... and now we have to catch up and stay ahead." THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Vancouver could get 58 extra taxis over holidays

TRANSPORTATION

'Standoff' with board and council means approval is iffy

Emily Jackson
Metro | Vancouver

Vancouverites could have access to up to 58 extra taxis this holiday season — but only if city council quickly grants its approval.

The Vancouver Taxi Association received permission from B.C.'s Passenger Transportation Board for 58 temporary taxi licences to meet urgent demand in the city between now and Jan. 8, PTB chair Don Zurowski told Metro on Wednesday.

The board approved the 10 per cent increase to the fleet under a provision that allows for additional operators during the Christmas party crunch, Zurowski said. The association originally applied for 198 temporary licences, but that would have required a more thorough public process, he added.

But before the extra cabs hit the streets, they must also get permission from city council, because the board and the city share joint jurisdiction over taxis.

That's not a sure thing, as council and the board have disagreed on licensing in the past year in a situation Coun. Meggs described to Metro as "a bit of a Mexican standoff."

The board rejected an application for 58 additional wheelchair taxis in Vancouver even though council was in favour, and council subsequently refused to grant 38 temporary licences to suburban taxis to pick up people from the nightclub district on the weekends even though the board was in favour.

The city's chief licensing inspector is working to get the vote on the 58 temporary cabs to council as soon as possible, a city spokeswoman said Wednesday. The earliest that could happen is at Thursday's council meeting, but if staff can't get it onto the agenda it will have to wait until Dec. 15 or Dec. 16.

City council and the Passenger Transportation Board have disagreed in the past year, with the board rejecting a council-approved proposal for more wheelchair taxis, and the council subsequently rejecting a board-favoured plan for temporary licences for suburban cabs. EMILY JACKSON/METRO

PARKS AND RECREATION

Union calls for more staff

There aren't enough boots on the ground to keep Vancouver's parks and streets spectacular, according to the head of the union that represents outdoor city workers.

At a council meeting on the proposed 2016 budget on Wednesday, CUPE Local 1004 president Andrew Ledger warned council that the loss of 80 jobs in parks and recreation since 2011 makes it very difficult to keep the city as clean as council expects it to be.

The time pressure to complete all the work sometimes means mowing park lawns before all garbage is collected, which can result in a mulch of garbage on city lawns, Ledger said.

"It's like a confetti of garbage," he said. "It's difficult to keep the green spaces as clean as you expect them to be when we don't have enough human resources."

There are approximately 550 outside workers down from 630 in 2011, he said.

Ledger encouraged council to make it a priority to ensure the city has the staff to deliver on what council has promised residents. He also noted that the union's contract with the city expires this year.

The city has recommend spending an extra $2.8 million on keeping public spaces clean next year. The extra spending is part of the proposed $1.26-billion operating budget that council will vote on next week. The city plans to spend 3.4 per cent more than it did in 2015 and plans to increase the property tax by 2.3 per cent.

EMILY JACKSON/METRO

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Three-year wait for popular pass

RECREATION

Inspiration Passes widely praised, worth $1,500 each

Tereza Verenca
For Metro | Vancouver

The average wait time to borrow a Vancouver Inspiration Pass has creeped up to slightly more than three years.

Since 2012, Vancouver residents who are 14 years and older have been accessing the free pass, which covers the entry fee to more than 25 venues (Telus World of Science, Vancouver Aquarium and Maplewood Farm, to name a few).

"When we launched, within a week of launching, the wait time was already over a year," said Sandra Singh, chief librarian at the Vancouver Public Library, which offers the pass program with partner venues and organizations. "It's extraordinarily popular. On average, we had about 350 holds per pass. Now when I look at a branch, the numbers are in the low 500s."

There are currently 12,323 total holds on the Inspiration Pass, with 1,465 of them at the central branch. The library issues 140 passes that are each valid for two weeks. Twenty of those are available at the central location and six at each of the neighbourhood branches. Another 40 are doled out through community partners who work with vulnerable families.

"The admission for a family of four to the aquarium is above $100, and if you want to have these types of experiences with your family, it adds up pretty quickly," Singh said. "It also gives people a chance to explore venues that they might not have thought they'd be interested in."

She added the library has no plans of expanding the popular program.

> **If you want to have these types of experiences with your family, it adds up pretty quickly.**
> Sandra Singh, chief librarian

"We are really thankful for the community organizations that have contributed their free admission to their venues and to their events. If you think about the number of free passes, that's a lot of deferred revenue for these organizations, so it's already a really generous contribution."

The maximum value of a pass — if it were to be used to its full potential — is worth roughly $1,500, according to Singh. Certain venues, however, have restrictions on when the pass can be used, so it's important to look for any blackout periods.

The Vancouver Inspiration Pass program, a joint venture between the Vancouver Public Library and various partners, launched in the fall of 2012. CONTRIBUTED

REPORT

Province makes 'modest gains' in adoption rates

More British Columbians are opening up their homes to children in need of adoption.

An update released Wednesday by Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, B.C.'s representative for children and youth, shows improvement in some areas of the province's adoption goals.

The report shows the number of approved adoptive homes rose from about 31 to 39 per month between 2013 and 2014.

Adoptive homes available for aboriginal children also climbed, from 34 at the end of March last year to 56 currently.

The province has also placed 451 children and youth in adoptive homes in its campaign to house 600 children by the end of March 2016.

Children's Minister Stephanie Cadieux says the program is making headway, while Turpel-Lafond says the modest gains are a positive step but the province still has a long way to go.

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Users want better service

TRANSPORTATION

HandyDart passengers rail against TransLink

Neal Hall
For Metro

More than a dozen angry HandyDart users attended a TransLink board meeting Wednesday, demanding better service for the sick, elderly and disabled.

Some of the users broke into tears explaining their frustrations with delays waiting for the HandyDart bus service.

"HandyDart is broken. Please fix it," Bet Tuason told the TransLink board, which oversees the transit system in the Vancouver region.

"Make the transportation system better than a taxi," he said, adding TransLink needs to hire a new contractor. The current HandyDart service is operated by a U.S. contractor.

Eric Doherty told the board that the disabled are treated like cattle and deserve a better transit system than the current one, which has been plagued by delays and trip denials.

A HandyDart vehicle drives through Vancouver in December last year. EMILY JACKSON/METRO FILE

Many of those who presented their views to the board were in wheelchairs and motorized scooters.

> **We are listening. We want to do it better.**
> Board chair Barry Forbes

Users said HandyDart has frozen service at 2009 levels, despite more demand from an ageing population.

TransLink tried to address the problems by using more taxis to transport people, including those who have medical appointments.

But users told the board taxis don't like transporting disabled and sick people, and taxi drivers often don't help people get into cabs — a service provided by HandyDart drivers.

One woman, Monica McGovern, told Metro she waited 90 minutes in the pouring rain last week for a HandyDart to arrive — more than an hour behind schedule.

"Quit taking away our basic human rights," HandyDart Riders' Alliance co-ordinator Beth McKellar angrily told the board.

She suggested a HandyDart user should be appointed to the board before the HandyDart contract expires in 2017.

Board chair Barry Forbes thanked the HandyDart users for their stories.

"We are listening," he said. "We want to do it better."

Forbes told reporters after the meeting that board members are concerned about the hardships of HandyDart users.

TransLink announced Wednesday its new board chair, effective Jan. 1, will be Don Rose, a senior corporate lawyer in Vancouver who has been on the board for the past five years.

TRANSIT

TransLink plans system fare review

TransLink's board heard Wednesday there will be a full review of the transit system's fare policy over the next two years.

TransLink's acting CEO, Cathy McLay, said TransLink will look at all the options, including choosing a flat rate or distance-based fare system.

In her report to the board, she said bus ridership is up more than one per cent since the Compass transit fare card was introduced, along with a bus-anywhere for the price of one-zone ticket, which began Oct. 5.

NEAL HALL/FOR METRO

Compass cards sell and are being used well

TransLink vice-president Lloyd Bauer told the board the Compass card rollout is progressing well.

Some 350,000 active cards are now in place, and another 1,000 to 2,000 are being sold daily. One million Compass tickets have been sold since August.

NEAL HALL/FOR METRO

Airline takes kids to North Pole

SANTA FLIGHT

It's the second year the plane took off from Vancouver

Tereza Verenca
For Metro | Vancouver

Santa Claus made an appearance on a 90-minute flight for 100 children and their families.
TEREZA VERENCA/FOR METRO

Oliver Broerken lights up as Santa makes a personal delivery.
TEREZA VERENCA/FOR METRO

Parents Wayne, left, and Chad McGill with their son Grayson, one of the families who went to the North Pole.
TEREZA VERENCA/FOR METRO

Locating Santa from up above in the clouds was an easy feat for more than 100 sick children and their families who boarded a flight to the North Pole on Wednesday. The goal was simple — locate St. Nick and bring him back to Vancouver.

The 90-minute adventure — which involved a singalong, lots of corny jokes and plenty of holiday cheer — was made possible through The Children's Wish Foundation and Air Transat.

Among the miniature passengers was Grayson McGill, along with his two dads, Chad and Wayne.

Four days after being born, the now four-year-old had open heart surgery to repair a heart defect.

Four hours after that, his parents were told he had maple syrup urine disease, a metabolic disorder were an enzyme that safely breaks down protein is missing from the liver. It affects about 1 in 180,000.

"Every food on the planet turns his blood into a neurotoxin to his brain, and within four days, if he ate like the rest of us eat, he would have brain swelling, brain damage, and in two weeks, he'd be in a coma and after that, it's fatal," Chad told Metro prior to the flight.

> **When you're told your child has a disease that you didn't even know was possible, and then when they tell you the name of it, you have no go-to as to what it could possibly mean.**
> Chad McGill

To avoid the worst-case scenario and a protein buildup, every morsel of food has to be weighed right to the decimal point.

For example, a whole egg has eight grams of protein, but Grayson can only have 6.4 grams during an entire day.

"He can't have a bite more or a bite less than the exact perfect amount, so for him, food is medicine," the father added.

His low-protein diet is prepared in the United States and shipped to Canada.

What may look like a regular muffin is in fact "science," according to Chad, who said he's thankful the cost of food is covered by the government.

Because his son is constantly growing, weekly trips to the hospital are required.

Doctors measure what his levels are at the molecular level by "spending 36 hours on a quarter million dollar machine."

"We have a new level of stress we will never come down from," Chad said.

"When you're told your child has a disease that you didn't even know was possible, and then when they tell you the name of it, you have no go-to as to what it could possibly mean."

The name of the disease comes from the fact the urine does smell like maple syrup.

Meanwhile, about 40 minutes after takeoff, Santa landed on the plane with his sleigh and reindeer.

Gifts were handed out to all the little kids, whose faces lit up like a Christmas tree, including Grayson's.

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Airbnb competes for rentals

REAL ESTATE

Would-be housing now off the market

Emily Jackson
Metro | Vancouver

A new study reveals Airbnb is growing in popularity in Vancouver, a phenomenon that researchers say could make it even harder for residents to find a place to live in an extremely tight rental market.

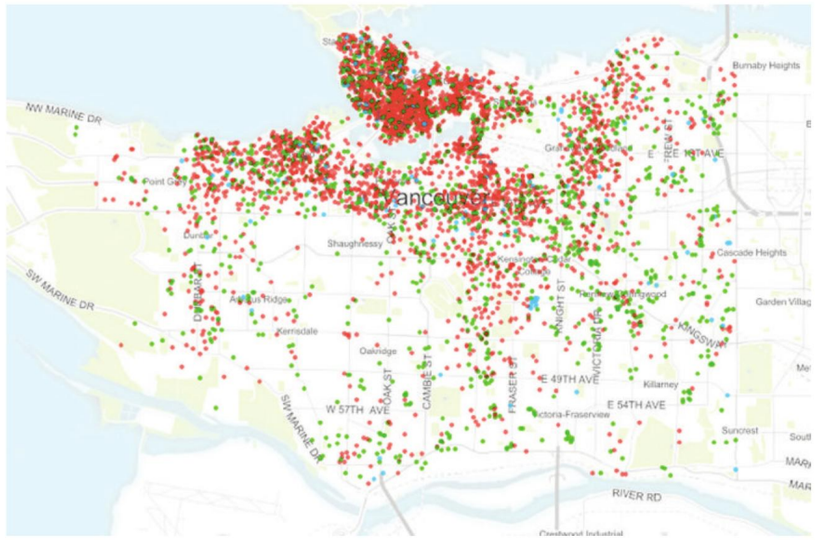
Research published by Murray Cox of Inside Airbnb found there were 4,728 units available to rent in Vancouver as of Dec. 3. That's up by about 1,000 from June, according to data from SFU urban studies master's student Karen Sawatzky, even though short-term rentals without a permit aren't legal.

Cox's data revealed the majority of listings are for entire homes (67 per cent) and one third of hosts have multiple listings.

Approximately a quarter of rentals are for entire homes that have recent and frequent bookings, suggesting Airbnb takes approximately 1,248 units out of the rental market in the city.

In a city where the vacancy rate drops to as low as 0.5 per cent in downtown neighbourhoods, that's a significant number of units to be taken off the market, Cox said.

"It might not be causing the housing issue, but it's definitely something that contributes to it," he said.



A study by Inside Airbnb found 4,728 units available for rent in Vancouver, where Airbnb isn't technically legal. COURTESY INSIDEAIRBNB.COM

The number of entire units rented (as opposed to private or shared rooms) and hosts with multiple properties indicate the people benefiting from Airbnb aren't necessarily just renting out their places for the weekend, but operating like a hotel.

Cox used a code to automatically collect public listing data on Airbnb's website (often referred to as scraping, he calls the practice "compiling"), resulting in a snapshot of the listings at a particular time. He has studied cities around the world.

SFU's Sawatzky said Cox's research is consistent with her discoveries.

She was surprised to see the listings continue to grow in the winter, which isn't a high season for tourism.

"It doesn't seem to be seasonal. That would strengthen the argument that it's undermining the supply of rental housing," Sawatzky said.

"I think a lot of people don't even realize it's not legal. If you can make a bunch of money and there doesn't seem to be any penalties, why wouldn't you?"

> **A lot of people don't even realize it's not legal.**
> Karen Sawatzky

FATALITY

Driver takes wrong lane on highway in pickup, pays for it with her life

A 48-year-old Chilliwack woman has died after driving a pickup truck in the wrong direction on Highway 1.

RCMP say the truck was travelling westbound in an eastbound lane when it collided head-on with a semi-truck just before midnight on Tuesday.

Cpl. Ronda McEven says police received a report but were unable to intercept the 2005 Chevrolet Silverado in Agassiz.

McEven says the female driver died at the scene, but the driver of the semi-truck was not hurt.

She says the early investigation indicates the driver erred, but contributing factors including reduced visibility due to rain are being considered.

Mounties and the BC Coroners Service are continuing their investigations.

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NE122G615

Ivan Henry payout may be over $30M

WRONGFUL CONVICTION

'No amount of money' can restore lost 27 years: Lawyer

A man who was wrongfully imprisoned for 27 years on sex crimes convictions deserves compensation of $30 million or more, his lawyer has argued in British Columbia Supreme Court.

John Laxton is calling on Chief Justice Christopher Hinkson to send a "strong message" of deterrence and vindication when deciding how much to award Ivan Henry.

"No amount of money can restore to him the decades he has spent behind bars," Laxton told court Wednesday. "However, a monetary award may offer some compensation of his long period of wrongful imprisonment and the many lost life opportunities it entails."

"There are few scenarios that can shake the public's confidence in the justice system more than those alleged by Mr. Henry."

Henry was acquitted by the B.C. Court of Appeal in 2010 on 10 counts of sexual assault involving eight women and is suing the province for compensation.

Laxton said in closing arguments that Hinkson has "almost unlimited discretion" in determining the amount the province should pay because there are few legal precedents. But he outlined several wrongful conviction cases to establish a ballpark figure.

He pointed to the case of Steven Truscott, who was wrongly sentenced to death at age 14 in 1959 for the rape and murder of a classmate. The Ontario government awarded him $6.5 million in 2008.

Laxton said that in 2015 dollars, that amount rises to $7.2 million or $722,000 a year. Multiplying that amount by 33 years - the time Henry spent in prison plus six years of unnecessary litigation - would get him nearly $24 million.

Ivan Henry
THE CANADIAN PRESS/DARRYL DYCK

He asked the judge to add an amount for vindication and deterrence, as well as the fact that there was no fault attributed to Crown or police in the Truscott case, bringing the total deserved by Henry to about $30 million.

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Syrian refugees are here

Opportunity to succeed

Haidah Amirzadeh was seven months pregnant and couldn't speak English when she arrived as a refugee in Saskatoon in 1989. Zahra Darzi fled Iran with her two daughters after her husband was executed. She claimed refugee status once she arrived in Regina in 1991.

Amirzadeh is now a lawyer specializing in immigration and refugee law who teaches at the University of Saskatchewan. Darzi is an engineer working at Saskatchewan's telephone utility.

Both say they came to Canada looking for an opportunity to succeed and both seized it. As Canada prepares to bring in thousands of Syrian refugees, the women say they want to remind people that, while many will come with little, it won't take long for them to get on their feet.

"I think, especially when somebody has been in such a difficult situation for so long, when they arrive to an opportunity, they really grab onto it," says Amirzadeh. "Nobody really wants to be a burden."

Amirzadeh left Iran and spent 18 months as a refugee in Turkey before settling in Canada. She recalls waiting to be selected, interviewed and picked. There was a lot of anxiety about being rejected.

Once in Canada, she learned English and put herself through law school.

"There are a lot of people who come with nothing, with no English, with no support, and then within a few years they become so successful, it's amazing."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

IMMIGRATION

'It will be a great day,' Trudeau says

About 300 Syrians are expected to arrive in Canada by Saturday as the long-awaited, first flights under the Liberal plan to resettle thousands of refugees from the war-torn region finally touch down.

The first aircraft is scheduled to land Thursday evening in Toronto, with a second flight arriving Saturday in Montreal, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau told the House of Commons during question period.

"Resettling refugees demonstrates our commitment to Canadians and to the world that Canada understands that we can and must do more," he said.

"It will be a great day."

While just over 400 refugees have arrived since the new government was sworn in on Nov. 4, Thursday marks the start of a program that's been weeks in the making, as officials in Canada and overseas have scrambled to help the Liberals meet a campaign promise to resettle 25,000 people.

Initially, the promise was to bring all of them in by year's end, but the government was forced to spread the commitment over a longer time period because of the logistics.

Six-year-old Ahmad Mazan Khabbaz, a refugee from Syria, is greeted by family friend Rakan Almasri, himself a recent arrival to Canada from Syria, as the youngest member of his family arrives with his parents and sisters at Pearson Airport on Wednesday. **While just over 400 refugees have arrived since the new government was sworn in, Thursday marks the start of a government program that's been weeks in the making.** CHRIS YOUNG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

> **Resettling refugees demonstrates ... that Canada understands that we can and must do more.** PM Justin Trudeau

The first group of refugees will fly to Canada on military planes, but the government says the rest of the flights scheduled for December are likely to be privately chartered aircraft.

The first 300 arrivals are among 10,000 privately sponsored refugees the government is seeking to welcome by Dec. 31.

Those with sponsors in the Toronto or Montreal areas will be told where and when to meet their new hosts, while those destined for other communities across Canada will stay overnight in their arrival cities before moving on the next day.

By the end of February, the government is itself hoping to resettle 15,000 refugees, to be initially spread among 36 different cities where agencies have agreements for resettlement services.

Roadblocks to getting the program off the ground have included getting the UN to find enough cases to refer to Canada for possible resettlement, technical hiccups regarding biometric screening equipment and diplomatic wrangling with governments in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey over exit visas.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Prime Minister Justin Trudeau speaks to media in Ottawa on Wednesday. His vow to Canadians reduces the tax rate of middle-income earners by 1.5 per cent. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Tax cuts are on the way

POLITICS

Changes will cost federal treasury over $1.2B per year

Michael Woods
Metro | Ottawa

The Liberal government is forging ahead with its plan to raise taxes on the rich and cut taxes for middle-income earners — despite the fiscal impact on federal coffers.

The Liberal campaign platform said the tax changes would be revenue neutral, but the government admitted this week that they won't be; they will cost the federal treasury $1.2 billion annually.

Asked about the $1.2 billion gap on Wednesday, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau told reporters there were different analyses during the campaign of how much the measures were going to cost and bring in.

The Liberals promised to raise taxes from 29 per cent to 33 per cent on incomes more than $200,000, and lower the tax rate from 22 per cent to 20.5 per cent on incomes between $44,000 and $89,000.

"That is what we are doing, and that is what we're committed to doing," Trudeau said. "It's not just good for middle-class Canadians to get more money in their pockets every paycheque, it's also good for fighting against the income inequality that continues to be a problem for growth in Canada."

A ways and means motion detailing the changes passed in the House of Commons 230-95 on Wednesday.

Trudeau TRACKER

- GENDER PARITY
- TAXATION
- REFUGEES
- CLIMATE
- INDIGENOUS WOMEN

IN BRIEF

Assisted dying law to take effect Thursday

Quebec's health minister Gaetan Barrette said Wednesday legislation on assisted dying will become law on Thursday.

Quebec's top tribunal gave the province permission to appeal a lower-court decision that granted an injunction aimed at blocking adoption of the law. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Duffy: Colleague told him expense claims OK

On his second day of testimony in Ottawa, Sen. Mike Duffy said a senior Conservative colleague told him to file expense claims indicating he lived primarily in Prince Edward Island in order to insulate himself from criticism he wasn't qualified to represent the province.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

DEFENCE

Liberals mum on security fund renewal

Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan was non-committal Wednesday about renewing Canada's $300-million support for Afghan security forces, despite a deadly attack at Kandahar Airfield that left as many as 37 people dead.

NATO foreign ministers last week approved an aid request to the international community as a whole, but Sajjan said it will be treated in the same manner as other urgent security matters.

> **We'll be reviewing all different options when it comes to supporting the fight against terrorism around the world.**
> Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan

Sajjan served three tours in the war-ravaged nation as a liaison officer who helped compile intelligence on both Taliban insurgents and local officials.

He said it was hard to watch the carnage that took place this week during a nearly 24-hour assault on the airfield near the southern Afghan city, for which the Taliban claimed responsibility.

Canada no longer has a military presence in Afghanistan.

NATO says it needs to raise $4 billion a year to keep the security forces going up to 2020.

Donor countries began paying the bills for Afghan troops and police following the 2012 NATO summit in Chicago and the Harper government made a $330-million commitment up to 2017. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Firearms by the numbers

UNITED STATES

Seven key facts about guns in America

Another U.S. mass shooting committed with powerful but legal guns. Another refusal by Congress to pass any new gun laws.

Americans' fixation with firearms is an easy target for world condemnation. Some of it, though, is based on myths, outdated information and flawed assumptions about the actual state of affairs. Here are a few surprising statistics.

This photo shows weapons carried by suspects at the scene of a shootout in San Bernardino, Calif. HANDOUT/SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

1 **Gun crime is way down.** High-profile mass shootings make America seem like a place where gun crime is spiralling out of control. In fact, gun crime is much less common there now than it was in the 1990s. Since 1993, the gun homicide rate has been cut in half, from seven per 100,000 people to 3.6 per 100,000, and the rate of non-deadly gun crime has dropped even more steeply.

2 **Gun ownership is at an all-time low**. Fewer U.S. households possessed guns last year than at any time in the last 40 years: 32 per cent, according to the General Social Survey. It appears that people who already owned a gun have been stocking up on more.

3 **There's strong support for gun restrictions.** Many Americans are highly supportive of specific gun-control proposals. In a Pew poll this summer, large majorities favoured mandatory background checks for people buying guns at gun shows (85 per cent), laws to prevent people with mental illnesses from buying guns (79 per cent), and a federal database to track gun sales (70 per cent).

4 **Some politicians are taking action.** When Congress refuses to do anything about guns even in the wake of mass shootings, it is easy to believe the entire American political system is doing nothing. That's not true: After the 2012 attack on a Colorado movie theatre, the state banned high-capacity magazines. Within two years of the 2012 Sandy Hook school shooting, five states had expanded background checks.

5 **America is still off the charts**. The U.S. continues to have a far higher gun homicide rate than any other wealthy industrialized country. According to one study, the U.S. gun homicide rate was 20 times higher in 2003 than the combined rate of 22 other major nations. The U.S. was responsible for a remarkable 80 per cent of all gun deaths in all of the 23 countries combined.

6 **The biggest gun problem is suicide.** Suicides get far less attention than homicides, but they account for about 60 per cent of U.S. gun deaths — and rising.

7 **African-Americans are the primary victims.** African-Americans, and especially African-American men, are far more likely to be the victims of gun crime than anyone else. In 2010, for example, blacks were seven times more likely than whites to be killed in a gun homicide.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

SAN BERNARDINO

Police, FBI still in dark

By the time the married couple who carried out the deadly San Bernardino, Calif., mass shooting came to the attention of police, it was far too late.

The FBI's acknowledgement that the shooters had been radicalized Muslims for "quite some time" points to the difficulty in discovering potential terrorists who keep a very low profile and shows the deadly consequences that can occur when identification comes too late.

"What this situation shows is (identification) is not a foolproof system. A hundred per cent prevention is not achievable." said David Schanzer, a Duke University public policy professor who runs a centre that studies terrorism. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

> **It appears these people were very good at hiding their intentions.**
> Prof. David Schanzer

TECHNOLOGY

Turtle-shaped robot invented to survey sea floor: Estonia

The Baltic seabed, littered with war debris and shipwrecks, has fascinated historians and researchers through the ages. But the underwater search robots they use pose problems by further disturbing the silty waters with their propeller movements.

Estonian engineers say they may have found a solution with their latest invention — a small, propeller-less underwater robot that causes minimum disturbance and lowers the risk of damage to submarine archaeology.

> **The fact the robot uses flippers for movement is a huge advantage...It can move in every direction.** Priit Latti, marine archaeologist

The unique feature of the U-CAT, about the size of a vacuum cleaner, is four silicon flippers inspired by streamlined sea turtles' arms and legs.

"They move in a slow and quiet motion and won't bring up sediment from the (sea) bottom," says Taavi Salumae, a designer at the Biorobotics Center of Tallinn University of Technology.

The underwater probe has been developed since 2012 in the EU-funded Arrows project that focuses on new technologies for marine research. It can stay submerged for four hours at a depth of 100 metres (330 feet) on a single battery charge of two hours. It's equipped with a camera and lights.

Most importantly, it can easily be rotated in tight spots that are too dangerous or difficult for human divers. But its small size has a few drawbacks: It is limited to shallow waters, unlike large robots, some of which can reach depths of six kilometres (20,000 feet) without damage from water pressure. Last summer, it was successfully tested in the Baltic Sea and the Mediterranean by a group of European researchers. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Researchers at Tallinn University of Technology examine the U-CAT robot in a lab as the other U-CAT robot is tested in an aquarium in Tallinn, Estonia. VITNIJA SALDAVA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Islamophobia rising in France

RACISM

Expert warns of detentions and abuse

France's state of emergency has allowed French police to conduct warrantless searches and detain people without charge — extraordinary powers that have been used to target the Muslim community, religious leaders say.

Yasser Louati is a spokesman for the Collective against Islamophobia in France. He spoke with Torstar News Service from Paris. The interview has been translated from French and edited for length and clarity.

Question: Your organization claims the state of emergency has unfairly targeted Muslims. What evidence do you have?

Answer: The raids have disproportionately targeted people of Islamic faith with overt brutality. We've collected evidence of 50 cases of abuse — and these are just the ones we know about — where police hurled racist abuse at families, women were assaulted and one even miscarried. When raids are conducted on erroneous intelligence — 90 per cent of the raids have found nothing — why humiliate people?

Q: Has there been more racism since the attacks?

A: The hate began the night of the attacks. Even before the attacks were finished, we already had death threats against Muslims and calls for revenge. Veiled women have been assaulted in front of their children — verbally, with fists and even with a box cutter.

Q: This attitude, do you see it as reflecting a bigger problem of Islamophobia, not only in France but across the western world?

A: We saw what Donald Trump said this week about banning Muslim immigration to the U.S. All I have to say is, will he ban the rich Saudis, too? I don't think so. It's just demagoguery. Donald Trump doesn't have policy, he only has punch lines.

Regarding the growing Islamophobia in the West, it's real but it's not due to the presence of Muslims. We've fabricated a Muslim problem in our society. We refuse to see Muslims as full-fledged citizens. We see them as Muslim, therefore an other, a foreigner. Muslims have been citizens of France for four generations and we continue to treat them as second-class.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

> **We've fabricated a Muslim problem in our society.**
> Yasser Louati

Yasser Louati, a spokesman for the Collective against Islamophobia in France, says what's happening in France is part of a growing racism in the West. COLLECTIF CONTRE L'ISLAMOPHOBIE

PARIS ATTACKS

Text reveals terrorist

It took a text from Syria to a mother in France to reveal the identity of the third killer at the Bataclan concert venue in Paris: Your son died as a martyr Nov. 13.

For four weeks, police had failed to identify the third gunman who stormed the venue along with two French Islamic extremists, killing nearly three-quarters of the total 130 people who died in the Paris attacks.

Then, about 10 days ago, Foued Mohamed-Aggad's mother in Strasbourg received a text message in English announcing her son's death "as a martyr"— a typical way the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant notifies families of casualties. She gave French police a DNA sample which showed one of her sons was killed inside the Bataclan.

The news announced Wednesday further confirms that the deadly Paris attacks were carried out largely, if not entirely, by Europeans trained by ISIL extremists. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

UPDATE: MIGRANT CRISIS **Smuggling boat sinks in Aegean, 12 drown, 12 missing; Greece clears out protesting migrants in the north**

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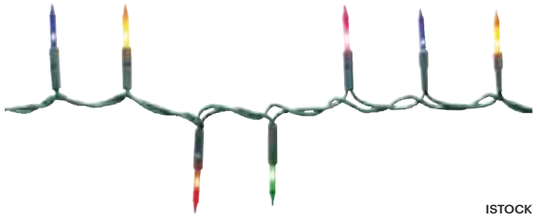
metro

LAWSUIT

Canadian Tire sues Walmart over lights



ISTOCK

Canadian Tire is accusing Walmart of ripping off the design of its made-in-Canada clip-on Christmas lights and is demanding that the mega-retailer cease and desist.

A Federal Court claim filed by Canadian Tire alleges that Walmart worked with two Taiwanese companies to copy the construction and packaging of its Noma Quick-Clip lights.

It wants Walmart to stop selling the "unique" product due to copyright infringement, and is seeking $500,000 in punitive damages. Walmart has yet to file a statement of defence.

Earlier this week, Canadian Tire issued an unrelated safety warning to customers who purchased Christmas lights from its Holiday Collection line. It says some of the products may pose a fire and shock hazard.

Canadian Tire is recalling 12 products made by Taizhou Hongpeng Colour Lanterns that were sold between Aug. 1, 2015, and Nov. 30, 2015, Canadian Tire said.

Health Canada has previously issued warnings this year about hazards with seasonal lights that were sold at Walmart, Dollarama, The Michaels Companies, Loblaw Companies Inc., Shoppers Drug Mart and Pharmaprix. Affected brands include Life at Home, Magi Decor, Celebrate it and Danson Decor.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

TECHNOLOGY

Home of bitcoin's likely mystery founder raided

Australian police on Wednesday raided the home and business premises in a Sydney suburb of a man that technology news sites have claimed is the founder of virtual currency bitcoin. Police said the searches were related to a tax investigation and not recent media reports on the virtual currency.

Technology publications Wired and Gizmodo published reports this week claiming an Australian businessman is bitcoin's likely inventor. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

market minute

DOLLAR
73.72¢ (+0.12¢)

TSX
12,937.59 (+15.12)

OIL
$37.16 US (–35¢)

GOLD
$1,076.50 US (+$1.20)

NATURAL GAS: $2.062 US (–0.8¢)
DOW JONES: 17,492.30 (–75.70)

Montreal-based Dollarama says its higher-priced items are intended to help it adjust to a weakening loonie. THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

Dollarama reveals prices creeping up

RETAIL

Discount chain says $1.25 is the new $1 — with cap rising to $4

Dollarama confirmed Wednesday what a lot of its customers already know: that the majority of items in the stores are priced above $1.25.

So the Montreal-based discount retailer — where everything originally sold for a loonie or even less when it was founded more than 20 years ago — said it will start to use $1.25 rather than a dollar as its new reference point when reporting sales and financial results.

And while its current maximum price point is $3, Dollarama will also introduce even higher-priced items of $3.50 and $4 starting in the second half of next year, chief executive Larry Rossy told analysts on a conference call.

He said many products at its 1,005 stores across Canada are still priced at a buck, but the $1.25 metric is "a better representation of our price point range."

For the three months ending Nov. 1, 59.7 per cent of sales came from prices above $1.25, compared with 54.1 per cent during the same period a year ago.

The company said the higher-priced items are intended to help it adjust to the impact of the weakening Canadian dollar.

Dollarama started increasing its prices beyond $1 about six years ago, and then introduced the $2.50 and $3 items in 2012.

> **History has a funny way of repeating itself.**
> Ken Wong

A spokesperson said the new $1.25 base price point is "totally unconnected to anything happening in stores," and that items without price stickers will remain $1 as usual.

Ken Wong, marketing professor at the Smith School of Business at Queen's University, said it reminds him of how the five-and-dime stores in the 1950s eventually had to drop that moniker as costs crept up, and then they were just swallowed up by Kresge's and Woolco, then K-Mart and Walmart.

"History has a funny way of repeating itself. No matter what business you're in, your prices can only be as low as your costs," said Wong.

Meanwhile the company — whose green and yellow signage already contains the word 'plus' beside the $1 logo to reflect higher prices — will try to stick to its cap on grocery items of $2, Rossy said.

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#6775

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$16,887

#6509

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AUTO, AIR, LOADED

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#6967

2014 KIA RONDO
AUTO, AIR, LOADED

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or $92 PMT
#6723

2014 KIA OPTIMA
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2015 JEEP PATRIOT 4WD
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or $99 PMT
#9781

2014 CHEVY MALIBU LT
AUTO, AIR, LOADED, CRUISE

$15,887
or $99 PMT
#6736

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BUYS OF THE WEEK!

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2005 DODGE MAGNUM
.....$6,888 #6339

2006 NISSAN ALTIMA
.....$8,787 #6596

2007 DODGE CHARGER
.....$8,887 #6022

2008 KIA MAGENTIS
.....$8,887 #6618

2006 CHRYSLER 300C
.....$8,888 #1502

2009 HYUNDAI TUCSON
.....$9,888 #8420

2011 CHEVROLET IMPALA LT
.....$9,977 #6396

2007 FORD EXPLORER LIMITED 4WD
.....$11,588 #6412

2006 CHEVY SILVERADO EXT 4WD
.....$11,888 #8564

2009 VW JETTA TDI
.....$11,888 #6533

2015 MERCEDES FORTWO PASSION
.....$12,888 #6434

2012 MITSUBISHI ECLIPSE SPYDER
.....$14,995 #0655

2010 CHEVROLET TRAVERSE LT AWD
.....$19,787 #5607

2014 DODGE RAM 1500 TRADESMAN
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metro VIEWS
Your essential daily news
Thursday, December 10, 2015

CHANTAL HÉBERT: ON HARPER'S SUCCESSOR

A majority of Conservatives will be looking for more than just a change in tone when they pick the next leader.

The exact number of Conservative supporters who held their nose to stick with Stephen Harper last October and/or who would rather have had a new leader to vote for will never be known, but based on a poll published earlier this week it was probably significant.

Designed to provide an early glimpse at the dynamics of Harper's succession, the Abacus poll suggests a majority of Conservatives will be looking for more than just a change in tone when they pick the next leader.

Over the course of the past decade, the Reform/Alliance branch of the party has dominated the Harper government. But at this early juncture, none of its leading members inspire more than tepid support among Conservative voters.

Under prominent right-of-centre champions such as Jason Kenney — Harper's go-to minister — or Saskatchewan premier Brad Wall, the party would risk being pushed back to it strongholds of Western Canada.

East of Manitoba, the dream candidate of a plurality of Conservative voters hails from the progressive-conservative side of the family, as does the runner-up.

Of the nine possible contenders put forward by Abacus, only Peter MacKay and Jean Charest, two former federal Tory leaders, enjoy double-digit support in every region of the country.

But Charest has made it clear that he is not contemplating a return to federal politics and his diehard fans seem to have accepted that his no is final.

Based on the Abacus poll, staying on the sidelines is a good call. Only in his home-province would Charest be competitive with MacKay. In Ontario and Atlantic Canada, his former caucus colleague would beat him hands down.

By comparison, Wall barely registers outside of the Prairies. Ditto for Jason Kenney.

That is not to say that Harper's succession is MacKay's for the asking or even that he wants the leadership. But if he did throw his hat in the ring, he would be the prohibitive front-runner, especially in a field that will probably not even feature some of the names that tested best in the Abacus poll.

Wall will be seeking another provincial mandate next year. He has consistently maintained that he has no interest in the federal job. Some believe that could change after the provincial election. But it is a rare premier who enters in a federal leadership campaign without a reasonable certainty of victory, and no such assurance would be on offer to Wall in the case of the Conservative Party.

Kenney has more solid support within the party than the poll indicates. But it is clear his high ministerial profile and a reputation for efficiency have not translated into popularity. Some of his Kenney's closest allies believe that the former minister could win the party, but doubt he could win the country. They note that there is a reason there has never been an openly socially conservative leader at the helm of a major federal party.

It will be weeks and possibly months before the actual lay of the post-Harper land takes shape.

Ontario MP Lisa Raitt ranks best among the other former Harper team members whose names were put to the test. In the months to come, her critic role in the Commons will pit her against Finance Minister Bill Morneau; the pair is already emerging as the duo to watch in question period. But Raitt has yet to demonstrate the same proficiency in French, and no leader who was not fluently bilingual has met with electoral success federally since Lester B. Pearson resigned in the sixties.

By all indications, the Conservatives are not going to rush to a leadership vote. Based on the Conservative performance in question period this week, the interim team Rona Ambrose leads is well up to the job of keeping a rookie Liberal government on its toes in the House.

It will be weeks and possibly months before the actual lay of the post-Harper land takes shape. And although recent experience shows that running to a distant also-ran finish ends up being little more than a vanity pursuit, some of the contenders will only join the race to raise their profiles.

The greater the number of contenders, the higher the odds will be that one of this week's dark horses ends up the winner. Joe Clark and Stéphane Dion were both unlikely beneficiaries of a crowded leadership field.

Chantal Hébert is a national affairs writer. Her column appears in Metro every Thursday.

THE MICROTREND: Self-tanner sales pale

The decades-long trend of both women and men looking suspiciously sun-kissed in Siberian climates seems to finally be on the wane. A study by British market-research firm Mintel has found sales of self-tanning lotion are sinking like the sun on a December afternoon; a shift that is actually kind of retro. While in past centuries parasol-toting ladies prized their milky complexions — it indicated that you hadn't been out in the fields like some kind of peasant — Coco Chanel is credited with popularizing the lightly toasted look in the 1920s. It became the beauty ideal from then on. Interestingly, Chanel's rosy glow was also meant to broadcast that she lived a life of leisure on the French Riviera and didn't need to work, but by that time the workplace was more likely to be a typing pool than a potato farm. SOURCE: THE SCOTSMAN

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD

metroview

Don't be PC. Say it: Donald Trump supporters are racist.

Donald J. Trump is right about one thing. We're far too politically correct.

So politically correct, in fact, that we can't even admit his followers are racist.

We're happy to heap scorn on the man himself. See how much of the world united to denounce his call to ban Muslims from entering the U.S. Witness Vancouver and Toronto seek to rebrand his real estate properties, lest a bigot's name be found in their skyline. Watch the Daily Show dub him "White ISIS" or WISIS.

But when it comes to Trump's devotees, we take a much different tack.

Pundits are hand-wringing trying to explain his continued lead in the Republican nomination polls, and seem to take comfort in the fact that more Republicans don't support Trump than do. Reporters covering his rallies noted this week that Trump seems to beguile his supporters with humour and flattery. Psychologists are positing Trump's fans are swayed mostly by his defiant stance.

But few are blaming Trump's supporters for their culpability in spreading anti-Muslim, anti-Mexican and anti-Chinese vitriol. And even fewer are explaining his popularity by calling a spade a racist.

Conservatives, of course, don't want to alienate their own, especially when they're courting votes.

Liberals have no excuse. Except possibly the fear of backlash, and I'll admit to being worried myself. I like the various explanations offered for Trump's popularity, because they make me feel better about my fellow humans.

If they're not hate-filled, it's easier to keep up my whole humanistic world view, never mind my Catholic one. We're supposed to be accepting of all. We also tend to believe people hold different opinions only because we haven't quite got to them yet.

I might, if I met them in a coffee shop, like a Donald Trump supporter without knowing they were one, and I wouldn't want to piss off my new brew buddy.

But the stakes, in the case of Trump's rally-goers, are far too high for all that.

Anti-Muslim sentiment is rising. And it doesn't need a boost from the most widely covered politician in the U.S., if not the world.

So let's be honest: Anti-Muslim sentiment is only getting that boost because Trump's disciples are racist. Not confused. Not afraid. Not manipulated by flattery. Racist.

I think it's very, very sad, yet important, and probably not politically correct, but I don't care, eh Trump? Otherwise, it's going to get worse and worse, folks. We have no choice. So, Donald, how's that for politically incorrect?

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metro LIFE
Your essential daily news

It's that time of year when books critics sort through the piles on their desks in search of the best of the best. While you can't go wrong with any of the titles on this year's Scotiabank Giller Prize shortlist — especially Andre Alexis' Fifteen Dogs, which took the award — plenty of other Canadian 2015 releases are worth picking up as a present, or for that coveted holiday-vacation read **SUE CARTER** FOR METRO

Every gift in the book

The Devil You Know, Elisabeth di Mariaffi (Patrick Crean Editions)
Elisabeth di Mariaffi's first thriller, set in 1993 just prior to the arrest of serial rapist Paul Bernardo, introduces a confident new voice who perfectly capturing the paranoia and fear of the time through the eyes of a young reporter.

The Social History of Ink, Ted Bishop (Viking)
Alberta professor Ted Bishop travels the world to uncover the cultural history of ink. Who knew that the ubiquitous ballpoint pen has such a sordid legacy of murder, rivalries and intrigue?

Kim Echlin, Under the Visible Life (Hamish Hamilton)
The power of music and the isolation of being an outsider makes Kim Echlin's story about a decades-long friendship between two women one of the year's most overlooked novels.

Beyond the Pale: Folklore, Family, and the Mystery of Our Hidden Genes, Emily Urquhart (HarperCollins)
After giving birth to a daughter with albinism, Emily Urquhart uses her background as a folklorist to uncover various stories and fables in hopes of better understanding the cultural narratives surrounding the genetic disorder.

If I Fall, If I Die, Michael Christie (McClelland & Stewart)
Vancouver author and former pro-skateboarder Michael Christie draws on his personal history in this novel about a young boy in Thunder Bay who longs to go outside and leave the safety of his agoraphobic mother.

Sidewalk Flowers, JonArno Lawson and Sydney Smith (Groundwood Books)
Sure, it's technically a kids' picture book, but JonArno Lawson's wordless poem, about a young girl observing the world while her distracted dad carries on their walk, is a poignant reminder for grown-ups to slow down. Warning: Sydney Smith's gorgeous illustrations may draw a few tears.

Stalin's Daughter, Rosemary Sullivan (HarperCollins)
History buffs will love Rosemary Sullivan's meaty biography of Svetlana Alliluyeva, the only daughter of the tyrant dictator Joseph Stalin, who spent her long, fascinating life trying to escape her father's name.

Russell Smith, Confidence (Biblioasis)
It has been nearly 20 years since Russell Smith burst onto the literary scene heralding a new generation of writers more interested in what was happening at the cocktail bar than the CanLit settings of yore. Smith's short stories prove that he is still an astute observer of urban mores.

The Brief Reincarnation of a Girl, Sue Goyette (Gaspereau Books)
Sue Goyette's powerful poetry collection doubles as documentary as she tries to make sense of the true-life story of a couple tried for murder after their young child died from a prescribed drug cocktail meant to treat ADHD and bipolar disorder.

James Grainger, Harmless (McClelland & Stewart)
It's no surprise that Atom Egoyan has already optioned James Grainger's debut novel. This taut, economically written thriller about a friends' weekend away contains some gory twists, and doubles as a clever exploration of contemporary masculinity.

Sue Carter is the editor at Quill & Quire magazine.

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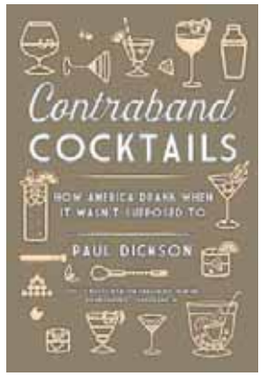
3 PICKS FOR THE BOOK LOVERS ON YOUR LIST

Everyone knows the best gifts are the ones that are thoughtful and a wink to the gift recipient's personality. Forget those generic gift cards and go for one of these fun books. Whether you're looking for something for your office Secret Santa party, for the guy or girl you're kind of into, or for your best friend, you're sure to win some points with one of these picks. EMILY LAURENCE FOR METRO

1 Contraband Cocktails by Paul Dickson

Give your favourite drinking buddy a recipe book for cocktails made popular during Prohibition. Just because consuming alcohol was illegal didn't stop people from drinking; there were over 32,000 speakeasies in New York City alone. Author Paul Dickson serves up some fascinating history and photographs of the Prohibition Era, and lots of recipes to keep you warm through the winter.

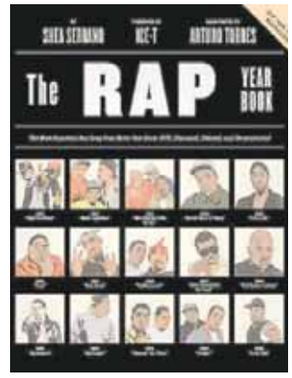


2 Picador Modern Classics

These pocket-sized titles are stunning, and even though they're tiny, the font isn't ridiculously small or hard to read. Books as good as Jeffrey Eugenides' The Virgin Suicides and Housekeeping by Marilynne Robinson.

3 The Rap Year Book by Shea Serrano

This new book highlights the pivotal moments in rap from the past 36 years. Biggie, Tupac, Sugarhill Gang, Drake — they're all in here. And with an intro by Ice-T, colorful pages packed with quizzes, lyric maps, artist portraits and infographics, it's way cooler than any history book you've ever seen.



BOOK BRIEFS

Nonfiction prize long list announced

Twelve titles have made the long list for the 2016 RBC Taylor Prize for nonfiction, including one by a former winner and another that's already won a major award.

Toronto journalist Ian Brown, who won the $25,000 Taylor prize in 2010 for his memoir The Boy in the Moon: A Father's Search for His Disabled Son, made the cut this time for Sixty: The Beginning of the End, or the End of the Beginning? (Random House Canada). Also on the list is Stalin's Daughter: The Extraordinary and Tumultuous Life of Svetlana Alliluyeva (HarperCollins Publishers) by Toronto's Rosemary Sullivan, which won the $60,000 Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction in October.

Another title on the list is Road Trip Rwanda: A Journey Into the New Heart of Africa (Viking Canada) by Calgary's Will Ferguson, who won the 2012 Scotiabank Giller Prize for his novel 419.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Ripley's tales hang by a head, or hair

BELIEVE IT OR NOT!

Curiosity drives popular oddities series, archivist says

Dean Lisk
Metro | Canada

At what point does a person realize they can dislocate their eyeball from its socket, or swallow a sword, or contort their body so it fits into a suitcase, or even lift a washing machine with only their hair?

"I think sword swallowing is lame. That is where I draw the line. But, how you learn you can swallow a sword is one of the greatest mysteries of my life," says Edward Meyer, vice president of exhibits and archives at Ripley's Entertainment Inc.

He had a chance to learn the answer a number of years ago when he met the man who holds a record for the most swords swallowed at once, the longest sword swallowed and who can even bend over and bow while performing the trick.

"I asked him, I'd wanted to ask a sword swallower this for 20 years, how did you learn to do this? And, I kid you not, he was a juggler and he found out the sword swallower in the show was earning twice his salary. He decided he was going to learn to do it. He walked into an army surplus store, took a sword off the wall and shoved it down his throat.

"He hurt himself, but realized what the trick was right away, and said, 'Hey I can do this.'"

Sword swallowing is one of the believable — even though you may be taken aback by it — facts included in Ripley's Believe It Or Not! Eye-Popping Oddities, the 12th and newest in a series that examines some of the odd, unusual and unbelievable.

Eye-Popping Oddities is the 12th book in the Ripley's Believe it Or Not! series. LIZ BEDDALL/METRO

"It's human curiosity, in a nutshell" Meyer says of Ripley's appeal. As the archivist, he takes care of the more than 35,000 exhibits in the entertainment chain's 32 "odditoriums" around the world, more than 50,000 photographs, and the 120,000 cartoons from its 98-years (and counting) of newspaper-syndicated columns.

"People want to know about the rest of the world and their place in it. And, if they are odd or eccentric, they want to think they have a big place in it, and that 15 minutes of fame that Andy (Warhol) promised everybody is a big motivator."

Many of the things you will find in the book, including a young woman who can lift a washing machine by her hair while hanging upside down, are submitted by the public. It's a tradition which began with Robert Ripley, who created his first Believe It or Not! cartoon for The New York Globe in 1918.

"He realized that people were his greatest source of information," says Meyer. "He said give me your stuff and I will make you famous, that is what it boils down to."

TOO WEIRD EVEN FOR RIPLEY'S

Editor's pick
Meyer's favourite picture in the book is from 1931 and features an animal trainer, who goes by the nickname "Cheerful," hanging from an elephant's mouth like a human pendulum.

"The faith in his training skills that this elephant isn't going to crush him, isn't going to sneeze on him or inhale him, or anything else, is mind blowing."

What readers want
While every book Ripley's puts out is different, Meyer says every edition includes a chapter on food.

"I don't get it," he says. "I've probably eaten more weird food than anybody else you will ever meet, but I don't like looking at pictures of weird foods. Give me the duck head, and I will try it, but I don't need to stare at it."

What you won't find
If it's 100 per cent true, Ripley's wants it. But, there are some things they won't touch, says Meyer.

"We shy away from nudity — totally away from pornography. We aren't really keen on aliens or 'witchcraft.' If you can't prove it — that doesn't mean we aren't interested in it — but if you can't prove it, we are not going to put our name on it." DEAN LISK/METRO

CANADA'S TOP TEN FILM FESTIVAL

Youth a big theme at fest

The majority of the Canadian movies picked for Canada's Top Ten Film Festival feature a youthful perspective.

Guantanamo's Child: Omar Khadr, by Patrick Reed and the Toronto Star's Michelle Shephard; Patricia Rozema's Into the Forest, starring Ellen Page and Evan Rachel Wood, and Andrew Cividino's Sleeping Giant are among the seven films on the list that focus on young protagonists.

In the case of Alan Zweig's HURT, about Steve Fonyo's tumultuous life in the 30 years since his 1985 cancer fundraising run across Canada at age 19, the documentary forms a disturbing story of a tarnished legacy.

"The future is really bright for Canadian cinema," said TIFF artistic director Cameron Bailey. "For anyone who's looking to see what's going on right now in Canadian movies, I think I would look to young people."

Bailey noted that Sleeping Giant and Closet Monster are both by first-time feature filmmakers.

"We always want a lot more young people to watch Canadian films," Bailey added. "If this helps, then that's great."

The Top 10 features, shorts and student shorts for 2015 were chosen by panels of filmmakers.

"The shorts, I think, are certainly some of the best films we've got on our list this year and certainly some of the best films that have been made in this country this year," said Bailey.

Rounding out the Top 10 feature list is Anne Émond's Les êtres chers (Our Loved Ones), Guy Maddin and Evan Johnson's The Forbidden Room and Philippe Falardeau's My Internship in Canada.

The festival runs Jan. 8 to 17, 2016 in Toronto, with select screenings also scheduled in Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, Halifax and Ottawa.

For a full list of Top 10 films and screening schedules, go to tiff.net.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

A wave of kidnappings of young boys shocks Montreal in Philippe Lesage's The Demons (Les demons). CONTRIBUTED

JOHANNA SCHNELLER WHAT I'M WATCHING

Peak Meta has arrived on the small screen

THE GRINDER, SEASON ONE, EPISODE THREE (CITY/FOX)

The Sanderson family — put-upon lawyer Stewart (Fred Savage), his wife Debbie (Mary Elizabeth Ellis), his brusque dad Dean Sr. (William Devane), and his heartthrob ex-TV-star brother Dean Jr. (Rob Lowe) are discussing Ray Donovan. (That's Ray Donovan the real TV series, which airs on a rival network, Showtime.)

This entire Grinder episode has revolved around someone erasing Ray Donovan from the family PVR. The words "Ray Donovan" have been uttered six times. Finally, they're watching the show. "Who's that?" Dean Sr. asks. "Ray Donovan!" the others holler.

Welcome to Peak Meta. The Grinder is the name of this show. It's also the name of the show-within-the-show that Dean Jr. starred in (and the name of his character).

It's a prodigal son story: To Stewart's eternal exasperation, people take Dean Jr. seriously as a lawyer simply because he played one on TV. The power and ubiquity of TV are referred to constantly. And of course, all four actors are known from now-iconic series The Wonder Years (Savage), The West Wing (Lowe), It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia (Ellis) and Knot's Landing (Devane).

The power of TV is constantly referred to on The Grinder. HANDOUT

Not long ago, meta-TV was an erudite concept found only on haute-cable shows. (Who remembers the telefilm The Positively True Adventures of the Alleged Texas Cheerleader-Murdering Mom, which made HBO hip in 1993?) Today it's as dated as the viewers who dived out of the way when they first saw Lumiere's train movie. Now that we barely exist off screen, meta is a sitcom punchline, the TV equivalent of Normcore.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

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Trumbo gets 3 SAG nods

AWARDS SEASON

Screen Actors Guild Awards highlight 2016 Oscar hopefuls

Trumbo landed three Screen Actors Guild Awards nominations. HANDOUT

The Hollywood blacklist drama Trumbo scored a leading three Screen Actors Guild Awards nominations on Wednesday, and sleeper contenders Beasts of No Nation and Straight Outta Compton entered the awards conversation in a real way when both were nominated for best ensemble drama.

Beasts of No Nation star Idris Elba was also nominated for best supporting actor, as well as for his role in TV's Luther. Other best ensemble nominees included Spotlight, which is emerging as the strongest candidate for best picture so far this season; Trumbo; and the housing bubble dramedy The Big Short.

The 22nd annual Screen Actors Guild Awards honouring the best film and television performances of the year will be presented Jan. 30 and broadcast life from Los Angels on TNT and TBS.

Starry ensemble casts left out of the SAG nominations included Ridley Scott's The Martian, Quentin Tarantino's The Hateful Eight and David O. Russell's Joy.

While Straight Outta Compton was a box office and critical hit, its award season prospects were unknown. On Monday, the African-American Film Critics Association named the N.W.A drama their best of the year, but it's been mostly overlooked by other critics' awards.

SAG's choices highlighted a few underdog performances.

Leading female performance nominees included Cate Blanchett (Carol), Brie Larson (Room) and Saoirse Ronan (Brooklyn), all of whom have dominated awards buzz, but also Sarah Silverman for the depression indie I Smile Back, and Helen Mirren for Woman in Gold, about an elderly Jewish woman looking to reclaim art once stolen by the Nazis. Mirren was also nominated for a supporting performance for Trumbo.

The lead actor nominees were a bit more expected, with recognition for Bryan Cranston (Trumbo), Johnny Depp (Black Mass), Leonardo DiCaprio (The Revenant), Michael Fassbender (Steve Jobs), and Eddie Redmayne (The Danish Girl).

STACKED DECK
On the TV side, political drama House of Cards leads with three SAG nods including best drama ensemble.

In the supporting category, Christian Bale was nominated for The Big Short, Mark Rylance for the Cold War thriller Bridge of Spies, Michael Shannon for playing a predatory real estate agent in 99 Homes and nine-year-old Vancouver native Jacob Tremblay was acknowledged for playing a child in captivity in Room.

Supporting actress contenders included London, Ont.'s Rachel McAdams (Spotlight), Kate Winslet (Steve Jobs), Alicia Vikander (The Danish Girl) and Rooney Mara (Carol). Mara and Vikander both have significant onscreen time in their respective movies, which has led some awards prognosticators to criticize their supporting actress campaigns.

Nominees are selected by separate movie and TV nominating panels, each comprised of over 2,000 randomly selected SAG members. Many members of the SAG movie panel also vote for the Academy Awards and as a result, the SAG nominees have traditionally served as a helpful indicator of potential Oscar acting nominees.

In a year when Hollywood's lack of diversity has become of critical concern following last Oscar's all-white acting slate, the individual performance nominees for movies remained largely monochromatic, save for Elba's supporting nominations.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Idris Elba is nominated for his role in the Netflix original film Beasts of No Nation. NETFLIX

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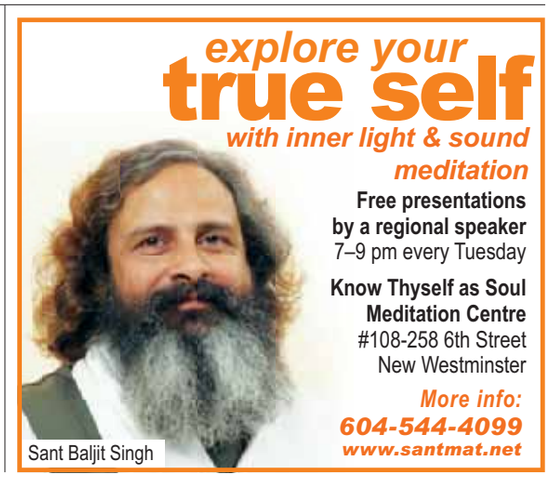


GOSSIP BRIEFS

Dad on the dating market

One Direction member Louis Tomlinson tried — and apparently failed — to make things work with girlfriend Briana Jungwirth, but he's since broken up with her, according to Life & Style. Oh, and Jungwirth is due to give birth to his kid next month.

"He dumped her," a source says, adding that the pregnant makeup artist didn't see it coming. "They had been trying to work things out the past few weeks during his One Direction tour. He even introduced Briana to his mom."

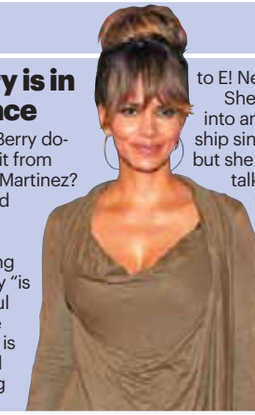
Maybe that didn't go so well? Anyway, lest he be labeled a complete wanker, Tomlinson has "promised to love and support their child financially." NED EHRBAR/METRO

Justin Bieber's Instagram crush

Justin Bieber shared an image of a mystery girl on his Instagram with the caption "Who is this!!" — which was quickly answered by his fans who, much like the flying monkeys of the Wicked Witch of the West, set out to fetch the account info of the girl for Bieber. Turns out she's a 17-year-old from Spain named Cindy Kimberly, according to BuzzFeed.

"I so do not know how to deal with this," Kimberly wrote in an Instagram post. Bieber, likely scared off by the fact that his Instagram crush is only 17, carried on with his life (posting pictures of his Playboy bunny-themed pants, and a car). MATTHEW LEE/METRO

Halle Berry is in a good place



So how is Halle Berry doing since her split from husband Olivier Martinez? Funny you should ask.

Less than two months after filing for divorce, Berry "is in a very peaceful and happy place at this time" and is dating "here and there," according to E! News.

She hasn't gotten into another relationship since her breakup but she has been talking to a few people very lightly and going out when she has time. She enjoys being single and doing her own thing." NED EHRBAR/METRO

MUSIC

Only copy of Wu Tang album goes unplayed

> **I could be convinced to listen to it earlier if Taylor Swift wants to hear it or something like that.**
> Martin Shkreli

Obviously there was no chance any of us were going to be the eventual owner of Once Upon a Time in Shaolin, Wu Tang Clan's new album for which they only made one physical copy, but I didn't expect this.

The new owner is none other than Martin Shkreli, the pharmaceutical CEO who rose to infamy earlier this year for jacking up the price of an AIDS medication to $750 a pill.

And what's even worse? He apparently hasn't even listened to it yet, as he's saving it for when he needs a pick-me-up.

"I could be convinced to listen to it earlier if Taylor Swift wants to hear it or something like that," Shkreli says, according to Bloomberg. "But for now, I think I'm going to kind of save it for a rainy day."

You monster. NED EHRBAR/METRO

Trudeau: Political pinup romances Vogue readers

PUBLISHING

Sure the pics are sexy, but they could be even steamier

Ned Ehrbar
Metro | Hollywood

So Vogue has gone and included newly minted Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in its January 2016 issue, along with a striking portrait photo by Norman Jean Roy that dolls him up like an old Hollywood star. A sexy embrace with his wife, Sophie Grégoire-Trudeau, is also captured by Roy. In Canada, the photos and articles were widely shared on social media (pictured).

Justin Trudeau Is the New Young Face of Canadian Politics

VOGUE.COM

Trudeau's wife, Sophie Grégoire-Trudeau (in an Oscar de la Renta dress), says of their first date, "At the end of dinner he said, 'I'm 31 years old, and I've bee...

PHOTO CREDITS: SCREENSHOTS FROM VOGUE.COM/FACEBOOK/PINTEREST

Now, discussions of Trudeau's looks are nothing new, but this feels like a whole new level. But did we miss a major opportunity? Imagine, for a moment, that Vogue had gone with their usual shooter for all things easy on the eyes, Annie Liebowitz.

We could've maybe had something like her infamous photo shoot with Miley Cyrus for Vanity Fair.

And now that the image of Justin Trudeau coquettishly wrapped in just a bed sheet is planted firmly in your head, I'll leave you to enjoy the rest of your day.

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metro HOME

Your essential daily news

For the ultimate Star Wars fan: Millennium Falcon bed from Pottery Barn Kids

A sleigh full of comfort, health

Sometimes it's the little things that add joy to our homes, whether it's creating a good night's sleep or comfort underfoot. Here's a few practical gifts that will make the recipient feel great all year long.

Karl Lohnes
For Metro Canada

1 HoMedics Deep Sound Machine
Drown out street noise and late-night commotion from the neighbours. $115, BedBathAndBeyond.ca

2 Ella Comfort Recliner
Put your feet up in style for improved circulation and a better-looking living room. From $4,000, CasaLife.com

3 Linen Granite Grey Mat
Pure comfort under the chef's feet. $120, GelPro.com

4 Iluminage Pillowcase With Copper Oxide
You could look younger in just a few months by sleeping on these pillowcases. $75, Sephora.com

5 Go Sport Blender
Looks good, takes up little counter space. $40, HamiltonBeach.ca

6 Lavender Vanilla Aromatherapy Pillow Mist
An all-natural way to help you fall asleep. $10, BathAndBodyWorks.com

7 Moen Engage 6-Spray WaterSense Hand Shower
An easy hook-up to an existing spout means turning an ordinary shower into a space experience. $75, Lowes.ca

8 Withings Smart Body Analyzer
Track more than just the holiday shortbread cookies you've eaten. $150, iStoreWorld.com

High Speed Internet 30Mbps
Unlimited Usage
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Free Modem Rental
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STARRY NIGHT CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS FROM OUTER SPACE

A planet or two
Banish from your mind those ugly reproductions of the solar system in science class. This paper planet will give your Christmas tree an air of elegance. (15 pounds/$31 CDN from the Conran Shop)

A beaded astronaut
Who said that space explorers lacked style? Not the Conran Shop, which has dressed its astronaut in beads. (10 pounds/$21 CDN)

A Star Wars tree
Star Wars is everywhere, in store windows, on TV, and even on your Christmas tree. You'll have to choose between the light side of the Force with this handsome Yoda in resin from Walmart, or the dark side with the shadowy Darth Vader. ($7.47 US/$10 CDN each)

Some festive robots
We can't have a space theme without a robot. These cute ones are multi-coloured and sparkly. ($21.50 US/$29 CDN for a set of three from Paper Chase)

A starry sky
And lastly let's not forget the star, which decorates our tree, but is also a celestial body floating in space. ($3 US/$4 CDN from Paper Chase) AFP

How to get festive in a hurry

TIPS

Six ways to decorate for the holidays in 20 minutes

With the holidays around the corner, it's time to add a little festive decor to your home. But not everyone has the space, time or desire to fit a big tree or lots of holiday tchotchkes in their home. Here are a handful of ways to add simple holiday vignettes that are small-space-friendly in 20 minutes or less.

1 Greenery on a mantle art
Bring the outdoors in. Gather some vases and fill with fresh winter greenery for an eye-catching mantle display. We used milk glass vases from a thrift shop but you can get a similar look using clear vases or by upcycling jars or bottles.

No mantle, but still love the look? Place the vases on open shelving or as a centrepiece on a holiday table. Keep greenery fresh by cutting the stems at an angle before placing in water. Freshen water daily.

2 Glass on a shelf
Turn a pretty glass into a miniature winter wonderland — a snow globe, a tiny bottlebrush tree and a sweet little fawn look whimsical inside a glass or jam jar.

Make faux snow by using salt or sugar. Then add a fawn and a tree. You can buy bottlebrush trees at craft stores (or even dollar stores) and the tiny fawns can be found at bakery supply stores and on Etsy.

3 Tray on a side table
A coffee table or side table is a great place to have fun adding some holiday decor. Gather seasonal items together on a tray. They don't have to be Christmas decorations. Think outside of the holiday box.

Try stacking some vintage books in pretty shades of green, adding a snow globe, some candles and a touch of greenery.

Vintage books can be found at thrift shops such as Goodwill or The Salvation Army. Add pieces with varying height, and layer with textures using natural elements like pine cones to keep it visually interesting. Anchor it all on a tray to keep it organized and stylish.

4 Surprise bouquet
Tie some fresh greenery together with floral wire to create a mini bouquet.

Add velvet ribbon and tie it to the handle of a cabinet or a doorknob. So simple — yet so effective.

Little details like this add a special touch. That's what the season's all about.

5 Chalkboard on a wall
Go vertical.

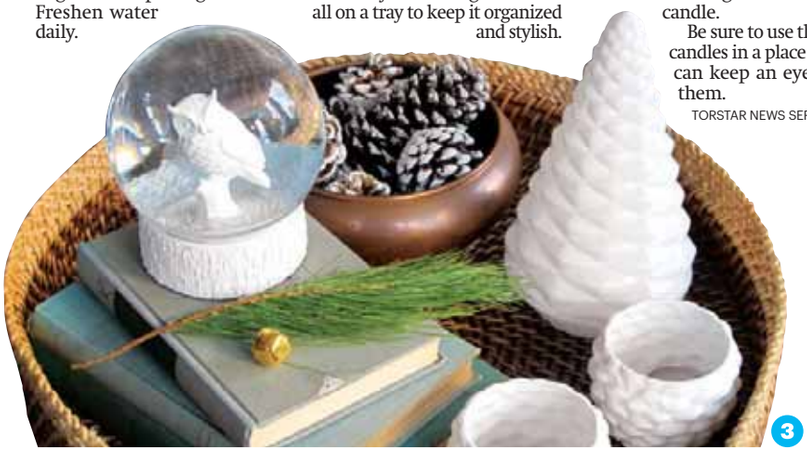
Turn a chalkboard into a tree and trim it with holiday cookie cutters. String some baker's twine or ribbon through a cookie cutter and hang it on your wall using Washi (pretty paper) tape.

No chalkboard? Use Washi tape to create the outline of a tree on an empty wall and decorate with cookie cutter ornaments.

6 Decor by candlelight
Take a set of plain white candles and embellish them with touches of holiday greenery tied with string. To help the greenery stay in place, use a little glue or spray adhesive and then wrap the string around the candle.

Be sure to use these candles in a place you can keep an eye on them.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



No time (or space) for a big tree? Sometimes a little fresh greenery and cookie-cutter "ornaments" are all you need. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

METRO SPACES

New year, new home

The new year is the ideal time to start fresh with a new home.

The perfect place to do that in Burnaby is Brentwood THREE, a new building in the upcoming master-planned community of The Amazing Brentwood.

The Amazing Brentwood is a 28-acre community of 11 residential towers, all set atop the newly transformed Brentwood Mall, a 1.1 million sq.ft. super regional urban centre consisting of shopping, dining and entertainment. The magnetism of Brentwood THREE is palpable. The covetable development sold 300 homes in two weeks in November, and continues to carry the momentum with a great selection of homes still available.

"The continued sales success at The Amazing Brentwood is a reflection of the value that this world-class project holds. Buyers aren't simply wowed by a new condo development, they want a full offering from quality homes to seamless transit integration, great shops and services to a cohesive master-planned vision," says Dan Wilson, executive vice president of Shape Living Corp., the developer of The Amazing Brentwood.

"North Burnaby has been a beautiful neighourhood for decades. This is a very good chance to enter the community," says Wilson. "The Amazing Brentwood is an entire reimagining of one of the City of Burnaby's most prominent areas — Brentwood Town Centre."

Accessibility from Brentwood THREE is obvious. The sought-after, established neighbourhood will offer 250+ shops and restaurants once Brentwood's first phase is complete, in 2018.

The $1.3 billion community is now under construction at Willingdon and Lougheed in Burnaby.

For residents at Brentwood THREE, this will create an incredibly desirable destination for shopping, dining and entertainment.

The area will serve as a community hub, providing a one-acre central event plaza that will host events from musical performances to farmers markets, year-round — all just an elevator ride away for Brentwood THREE residents.

Easy access to transportation is a gift in itself. Brentwood SkyTrain Station is downstairs from your suite when you live at The Amazing Brentwood. By SkyTrain, getting downtown takes less than 20 minutes from your front step.

1.1M sq. ft. of shopping, dining and entertainment. CONTRIBUTED

The Commercial Drive-Broadway corridor with its unique shops, restaurants and cafes is accessible in just seven minutes, the new Evergreen Line will be accessible in 10 minutes and you can get to the Vancouver International Airport in 48 minutes.

The Lower Mainland's top educational institutions are all within easy access. Ride the SkyTrain to Production Way Station to get to Simon Fraser University (SFU) Burnaby, or on to Surrey Central Station for SFU Surrey. A five-minute bus ride from The Amazing Brentwood will take you to Vancouver's premier technical college, British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT).

"The Amazing Brentwood neighbourhood is a game changer for Burnaby," says Wilson.

A HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

A beautiful new home is a treat over the holidays, and year-round.

Homes at Brentwood THREE, a development at The Amazing Brentwood community in Burnaby, were designed with comfort and convenience at heart.

Sleek, richly finished interiors reflect quality and style whether they're unadorned, or festooned with holiday decorations.

"Homes at Brentwood THREE were designed to adapt to all seasons and occasions in your life," says Dan Wilson, executive vice president of Shape Living Corp., the developer of The Amazing Brentwood.

The homes' adaptability is evidenced in the high-quality finishings, which come standard in the one-, two- and three-bedroom residences.

Homes are finished with polished stone countertops, European cabinetry with soft-close hardware and high-end Bosch European appliances, including a refrigerator and dishwasher concealed behind the cabinetry.

Residents will appreciate the smart space-saving techniques throughout the homes, including a convenient kitchen island with breakfast bar — good news for anyone looking to make holiday baking on the kitchen counter.

The floor-to-ceiling cabinets provide up to 40 per cent more storage space, so your counters can be free of unnecessary clutter. And the convenience extends to the laundry room too. The side-by-side washer and dryer provide maximal comfort and usability.

Shape living kitchen shown in Classic Walnut. CONTRIBUTED

The 526 new homes at The Amazing Brentwood THREE start at $382,600 for a one-bedroom and $453,800 for a two-bedroom.

The 15,000-square-foot Presentation Centre will be open over the holidays and visitors are welcome. Find it at 4567 Lougheed Highway (Brentwood Mall). Open daily noon to 5:00 p.m., theamazingbrentwood.com, 604-563-8386.

Keep your new year's resolutions

The amenities at The Amazing Brentwood make New Year's resolutions easy to maintain.

Fitness is a major goal around New Year's, but residents at The Amazing Brentwood THREE have private access to a state-of-the-art fitness centre year-round. Keep your heart rate up on the cardio equipment, increase your strength with the weight-training facilities, and stretch out to find your centre in the yoga studio and meditation space.

The amenity spaces at The Amazing Brentwood will also offer a great place for residents to hang out, meet their neighbours and share with their friends and loved ones. Residents will have exclusive access to nearly 18,000 square feet of private outdoor space with its children's play area, gardens and courtyards. In the spring and summer, enjoy the outdoor fireplaces and barbecue with friends.

For your next event, book the residents-only 8,400-square-foot indoor space complete with social lounges, chef's kitchen, music room, and two guest suites.

300 HOMES SOLD IN 2 WEEKS

THE AMAZING BRENTWOOD THREE.

MORE AMAZING HOMES. SAME FUNDAMENTAL VALUES.

We sold out towers BRENTWOOD ONE & TWO! Now we're bringing you BRENTWOOD THREE which will continue giving homeowners unprecedented value in these **8 AMAZING WAYS:**

1
THE VISION:
A 28-acre master-plan with everything you need

2
TRANSIT AT YOUR DOOR:
Seamlessly integrated SkyTrain is on-site

3
SHOPPING & DINING:
250+ shops & restaurants downstairs

4
ARTS, CULTURE & ENTERTAINMENT:
In the one-acre central event plaza

5
SERVICE & SECURITY:
24 hours a day, every day

6
HOMES & AMENITIES:
The best home design and over 25,000 sq.ft. of extras

7
ENDLESS VIEWS:
From every home in all directions

8
VERIFIED VALUE:
Get unprecedented long-term investment value

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AMAZING SELECTION OF HOMES AVAILABLE. ONE BEDROOM HOMES STARTING FROM $382,600. TWO BEDROOM HOMES STARTING FROM $453,800.

4567 LOUGHEED HIGHWAY, BURNABY (BRENTWOOD MALL). OPEN DAILY12-5PM

LEARN MORE & REGISTER AT THEAMAZINGBRENTWOOD.COM 604.563.8386

SHAPE | LIVING

RENNIE MARKETING SYSTEMS

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Live in a social hub

Most popular new community in Maple Ridge

The opportunity to socialize with the people you care about is invaluable, wherever you live.

There are some communities that are designed to promote human interaction, and Maple Heights by StreetSide Developments, a new community of townhomes in Maple Ridge, is one of them. Phases one and two of the development have sold out and homes in phase three are now selling, priced from $350's including net GST.

"It's easy to see why Maple Heights is the most popular new community in Maple Ridge," says Vanessa Isler, director of sales and marketing at StreetSide Developments. "There are endless activities to enjoy here."

The family-oriented neighbourhood features two- and three-storey, three-bedroom townhomes that are planned to bring the community together, and located at an accessible distance from schools, shopping and public transit.

When residents are looking to take a friend out on the town, many options in downtown Maple Ridge await. If you're craving a macchiato, the neighbourhood has many coffee shops to enjoy, including Starbucks, Tim Hortons or Kanaka Creek Coffee.

Restaurants in the area, including Austin Fish and Chips or Kingfishers Waterfront Bar and Grill, will please your tastebuds and impress your guests.

A master planned community, Maple Heights features beautiful landscaping designed to tie in with the larger master plan that will allow residents to meander through the community on paths and boardwalks over the adjacent creek. Residents will have the freedom to sit under the canopied seating area and kids and parents can enjoy the outdoor children's play area.

Inside the homes are meant for a different kind of social occasion. They're the perfect place to celebrate and relax with friends and family. Maple Heights homes will welcome your guests with attractive details including shaker-style or flat-panel cabinetry, thick quartz countertops, and stainless steel, energy efficient appliances.

CONTRIBUTED

When you're looking to spend time outside, but still within the bounds of your property, each home features a front or back yard with a generous patio or deck and professional landscaping.

Beyond Maple Heights, residents will have a world of activities to discover in the family-friendly neighbourhood, including hiking, sports activities and shopping.

To learn more visit the Maple Heights sales centre located at 104-11305 240th St. in Maple Ridge, open daily 12-5 p.m. (except Fridays).

CONTRIBUTED

ONLY 5% DOWN • PRICES INCLUDE NET GST •
PURE MAPLE RIDGE

Phase 3 Homes Now Available

MAPLE HEIGHTS

Maple Heights captures the down-to-earth nature you want with everything you'll ever need. Ideally located close to shops, amenities, schools, parks, restaurants, and only minutes from Kanaka Creek and the West Coast Express. It's the perfect blend of indoor outdoor living with spacious 3 bedroom floorplans, stainless steel appliances, attached garages, generous patios and decks with beautifully landscaped front and back yards. Discover your new Maple Heights home today and live Pure Maple Ridge.

Maple Ridge's Most Popular Community Priced From The $350's*

TWO DISPLAY HOMES OPEN DAILY FROM 12-5 PM, EXCEPT FRIDAYS
Kanaka Way & 240th Street, Maple Ridge, BC
604.380.1215 MapleHeights.ca

* Prices include net GST. See sales representative for more details. Prices and incentives subject to change without notice. E.&O.E.

STREETSIDE DEVELOPMENTS A QUALICO Company

An easy walk home at South Point Walk

Walkability is one of the key building blocks of a great home.

At South Point Walk, a four-storey, 42-unit condo development in South Surrey, the value of walkability is apparent.

"Home is where you can get to know your neighbourhood on foot," says Vanessa Isler, director of sales and marketing at StreetSide, the developer of South Point Walk. "When we were choosing the site for South Point Walk and designing its landscaping, we paid close attention to the element of walkability — how easy would it really be for our residents to walk to find their necessities, or simply find local trails to enjoy nature."

Homes at South Point Walk have easy access to shopping and restaurants, parks and pathways, trails and transit.

Residents can experience nature every day in the green neighbourhood. Take a brisk walk along one of the nearby trails, at the local seaside boardwalk, or venture out onto the greens at one of the many local golf courses.

The South Point Exchange mall and South Point Annex shopping centre are a quick journey from South Point Walk, providing residents access to a well-rounded selection of shops and services.

Come home from your walk or shopping trip and start dinner with ease. The beautiful kitchens at South Point Walk are a pleasure to work in, featuring gas ranges, stainless steel appliances, Shaker style cabinetry, and thick quartz countertops.

Main bathrooms feature stone counters, chrome fixtures and deep soaker tubs, and ensuites feature the additional luxuries of in-floor heating and enlarged showers.

The one-, two-, or two-bedroom-plus-den homes at South Point Walk are move-in ready and nearly sold out. For a limited time buyers can take advantage of the Fall Move-In Sale. Buyers can save up to $5,000 on the purchase of a new home at South Point Walk — starting from the $240,000s, including net GST. Buyers can own with just five per cent down.

CONTRIBUTED

The South Point Walk sales centre and display suite are open from 12-5 p.m. daily except Fridays at 15188 29A Ave, Surrey, For more information, call (604) 560-3238 or online at southpointwalk.ca.

FALL MOVE-IN SALE

SAVE UP TO $5,000* NOW • 8 HOMES REMAIN • FROM THE 260'S* INCL NET GST

SOUTH POINT WALK

Live in the heart of South Surrey where everything you need is nearby. Shopping and restaurants, parks and pathways, trails and transit – it's all here. Walk to South Point Exchange Mall or the shops at High Street. Choose a spacious 1, 2, or 2 plus den home elegantly appointed with quality finishings including gas ranges, stainless steel appliance packages, Shaker style cabinetry, and thick quartz island countertops. This fall is the perfect time to move in to South Point Walk and save up to $5,000* off.

SALES CENTRE OPEN DAILY

12–5 pm (Except Fridays), 152nd Street & 29A Ave, Surrey

* See sales representative for details. Prices and incentives subject to change without notice.

604.560.3238

SouthPointWalk.ca

2016 Georgie AWARDS FINALIST

STREETSIDE DEVELOPMENTS A QUALICO Company

FREEDOM WITH A FREEHOLD HOME

When you're buying a home of your own, you're looking for freedom. That means the freedom to do what you want with your own property.

Freehold homes, those in which the owner doesn't need to consult with a strata before they make changes to their property, and doesn't need to pay strata fees for maintenance, have undeniable benefits.

"Condos are great for maintenance-free living, but many condo owners find their strata difficult to deal with," says Vanessa Isler, director of sales and marketing at StreetSide Developments, the developer of Hycroft, a collection of beautifully appointed freehold rowhomes in the Grandview Heights neighbourhood of South Surrey that is now down to its final six homes, priced from $649,900.

"At Hycroft there are no strata fees, so buyers can feel free to do what they'd like with their home," says Isler.

The 65 homes in the Hycroft neighbourhood feature space and freedom inside as well as outside. At more than 2,200 square feet, each of the four-bedroom homes gives you the space to do what you love most. Families have lots of room to grow. Finished basements have the flexibility to become the entertainment room, storage space, art studio or any kind of room you can use to express yourself.

Live the lifestyle you want at Hycroft, with kitchens embellished with marble mosaic tile accents and backed by solid quartz-slab countertops, and custom Shaker-style cabinetry. The high-end stainless steel Jenn-Air appliances make cooking in the kitchen fun.

Bathrooms are spacious too. In your ensuite you'll find in-floor heating by Nu-Heat to warm your feet when you get out of bed in the morning. Showers have high-end Grohe rain showerheads and Carrera marble accents impart a sense of luxury.

Outside the house, the walkout patios, fenced yards and detached garages extend the sense of space into the neighbourhood, so you and your family can feel comfortable, private and safe outdoors, whether you're gardening, barbecuing or watching the kids play.

The Hycroft presentation centre is open 12-5 p.m. daily except Fridays and located at 16467 24 Avenue, Surrey. For more information call (604) 541-2495 or visit online at hycroftrowhomes.com.

CONTRIBUTED

A THRIVING COMMUNITY AWAITS YOU AT HYCROFT

It's the perfect lifestyle choice for families! Situated in a beautiful and well-established South Surrey neighbourhood, these large 4-bedroom rowhomes offer all the advantages of a single-family home, including walkout patios, fenced yards, finished basements and a detached garage. You'll love living close to parks, beaches and nature trails, and you can walk to Morgan Crossing, Southridge Academy, and the new Aquatics Centre. Plus Hycroft is freehold, which means no strata fees. The freedom and value are priceless. Limited homes remaining. Don't miss out.

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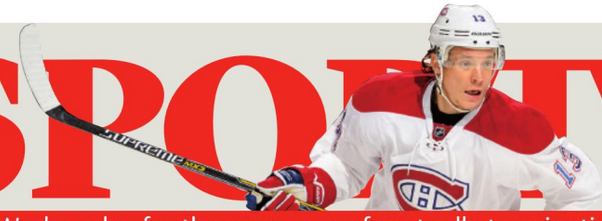
Any prices exclude taxes. StreetSide Developments reserves the right to make modifications and changes to the building designs, specifications and features should they become necessary. Floor plans, elevations, room sizes and square footages are based on preliminary architectural drawings and may vary from the actual built home. E.&O.E.

metro SPORTS



The Habs placed winger Alexander Semin on unconditional waivers Wednesday for the purposes of mutually terminating his contract

Canucks hold on for win

NHL

Ryan Miller's net heroics carry day over New York

Cam Tucker
Metro | Vancouver

Ryan Miller was sharp, and a little bit lucky, too. His teammates, on the other hand, not so much.

At least not to begin Wednesday's game against the visiting New York Rangers.

WEDNESDAY at Rogers Arena

2	1
CANUCKS	RANGERS

The Vancouver Canucks needed Miller to be as close to perfect as possible. It was only because of their goalie's performance — and the help of his goal posts — through the first 40 minutes that his teammates even had a chance for a win.

For two periods, it was like a constant barrage of rubber directed toward the Vancouver net.

According to hockeystats.ca, the Rangers had 46 shot attempts, while the Canucks had just 24, a paltry figure by comparison.

But in the end, the Canucks finally woke up and provided some goal support for Miller in a 2-1 victory that included a crazy and controversial third period at Rogers Arena.

That's two wins in a row for the Canucks to end this homestand.

Not surprisingly, the Sedin twins, Daniel and Henrik, led the way offensively.

Daniel Sedin, on a beautiful deflection at 9:24 of the third period, gave Vancouver its second lead of the night. That goal came just 30 seconds after Dan Boyle scored for New York on a penalty shot to tie the game.

Both Sedin twins were livid with the referee's decision to reward the Rangers a penalty shot after a Vancouver player was called for covering the puck in the crease.

Alex Edler opened the scoring early in the third period, snapping a wrist shot over the left shoulder of New York goalie Henrik Lundqvist while the Canucks enjoyed a five-on-three power play.

The Canucks were forced to play the remaining 7:33 of action with five defenceman after Dan Hamhuis took a puck to the face and left the game.

He immediately skated off the ice with the assistance of his teammates and a member of the training staff before being helped to the dressing room.

The Canucks, now on the road for six games, move to second place in the Pacific Division – with an 11-11-8 record.

Canucks' Bo Horvat (53) checks New York's Jesper Fast during action at Rogers Arena Wednesday. DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

SOCCER

MLS puts $37M into players

Major League Soccer believes a newly introduced investment plan of $37 million into player compensation over the next two years will benefit the league's on-field product by giving "clubs the opportunity to sign more impact players," according to a statement.

The plan, unveiled Wednesday, could have major impact on all MLS clubs, including the Vancouver Whitecaps, as teams will receive $800,000 — known as Targeted Allocation Money (TAM) — in additional funds for 2016 and $800,000 in 2017.

Teams can use that money to sign players that make more than $457,500, the 2016 maximum budget charge, but within a ceiling of $1 million. It also allows teams $125,000 a season to sign homegrown players.

The league points to numerous signings this past year — Montreal midfielder Johan Venegas, San Jose midfielder Anibal Godoy and Columbus defender Gastón Sauro — as a result of this plan, which has now been greatly expanded.

"We saw immediate dividends this past season with the initial investment in Targeted Allocation Money, and our owners believe that additional spending — especially for players who will impact the middle of our rosters — will make MLS even more entertaining and compelling," said MLS deputy commissioner Mark Abbott in a statement.

CAM TUCKER/METRO

IN BRIEF

Mariners trade for Lind
The Seattle Mariners have acquired first baseman Adam Lind from the Milwaukee Brewers for minor-league pitchers Daniel Missaki, Carlos Herrera and Freddy Peralta. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ex-Jay Lawrie on move
The Oakland A's have traded third baseman Brett Lawrie of Langley, B.C., to the Chicago White Sox for right-hander J.B. Wendelken and left-hander Zack Erwin. The A's acquired Lawrie last off-season from the Toronto Blue Jays. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Five Lions on CFL all-stars
The B.C. Lions, Edmonton Eskimos and Hamilton Tiger-Cats led all teams Wednesday with five selections apiece to the CFL all-star team roster. Lions named include offensive tackle Jovan Olafioye, running back Andrew Harris, receiver Emmanuel Arceneaux, linebacker Adam Bighill and punter Richie Leone. THE CANADIAN PRESS

This teen turns heads, literally

Angela Lee, left, defeated Natalie Gonzales Hills in Singapore last month using a twister submission. HANDOUT/THE CANADIAN PRESS

MMA

Vancouver's Angela Lee on the rise as a strawweight

Just 19, Vancouver-born MMA fighter Angela Lee showed a repertoire well beyond her years last month when she stopped Australian Natalie Gonzales Hills in Singapore using a rare twister submission.

It was the first such submission in the history of the Asia-based One Championship promotion. And it's only happened once in the UFC, in 2011 when Chan Sung Jung — better known as the Korean Zombie — stopped Leonard Garcia.

Lee is turning heads, literally.

Essentially the twister involves a nasty corkscrew-like twist of your opponent, pulling the lower body one way via a leg triangle and the upper body the other way by neck crank.

"It's quite an uncomfortable position," Lee said with a giggle. "You feel if you don't tap, you're going to be snapped in half, twisted in half, I guess."

Lee, a strawweight who now makes her home in Hawaii, goes after her fourth win in as many pro fights Friday when she faces 26-year-old Pole Lena Tkhorevska (3-1) on One Championships' "Spirit of Champions" card before a soldout crowd of 20,000 at the Mall of Asia Arena in Manila.

Her 17-year-old brother Christian makes his pro debut on the card against Australian David Meak (1-4). The rest of the family, as well as her Angela's grandparents from Vancouver, will be on hand to see the show.

Angela Lee GETTY IMAGES

The main event features former UFC fighter Brandon (The Truth) Vera (13-7) against British heavyweight Chi Lewis-Parry, a six-foot-nine former pro basketball player in Europe who has won all six of his MMA bout.

Martial arts is a family affair for the Lees, who are based out of Mililani on the island of Oahu. Father Ken and mother Jewelz are decorated martial artists who teach at their United MMA gym in Waipahu where Angela and Christian are also instructors.

> **"It's quite an uncomfortable position."**
> Angela Lee

Angela's younger sister Victoria, 11, and brother Adrian, 9, train six days a week in martial arts.

Ken was born in Singapore and Jewelz in South Korea. She moved to Hawaii at a young age while he came to Canada at the age of four. They met in Hawaii when Ken went there for high school, moving to Canada after graduation and eventually marrying.

Angela lived in Vancouver and elsewhere in Canada until she was seven, when the family moved to Hawaii. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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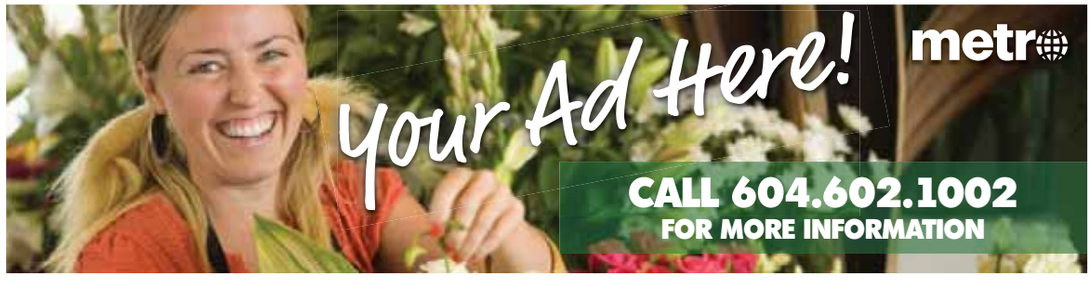


RECIPE Baked Fried Chicken

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

All the crunch of fried chicken but with much less fat in the final dish, this baked recipe is sure to become part of your regular roster!

Ready in
Prep time: 60 minutes
Serves 4 to 6

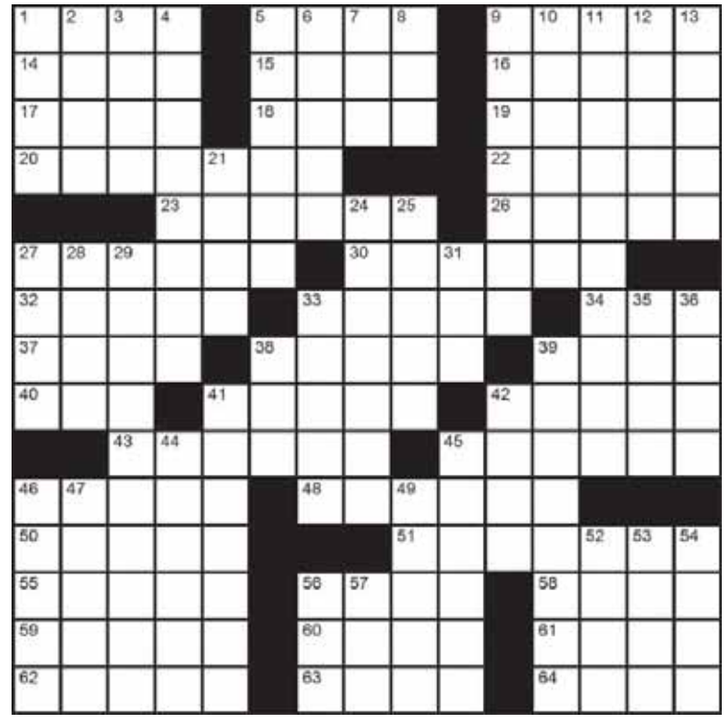
Ingredients
- 1/4 cup buttermilk (or add a tsp of vinegar to regular milk and let it sit for 15 minutes)
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 8 or 9 chicken pieces (thighs and drumsticks)
- 1 1/2 cups whole wheat bread crumbs
- 2 Tbsp fresh thyme
- 1 1/2 tsp lemon zest
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions
1. Combine the buttermilk and garlic together in a shallow pan container. Coat the chicken pieces thoroughly and cover with plastic wrap. Place in the fridge to marinate for a half an hour or up to over night. Turn the chicken pieces over at least once while marinating.
2. Preheat the oven to 400 F.
3. Mix bread crumbs in a bowl together with the thyme, zest and salt and pepper.
4. Dredge chicken pieces in the bread crumb mixture and place them on a baking sheet. Press bread crumbs onto the meat if some falls off.
5. Bake for 30 to 40 minutes until the outside of the chicken is deeply golden and the meat is cooked through.

FOR MORE MEAL IDEAS, VISIT SWEETPOTATOCHRONICLES.COM

CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Take a genetic sample
5. Rick Danko group, The _
9. Verity
14. Fork prong
15. Comic strip dog
16. Artwork like the original, informally
17. Famous volcano
18. Canadian pop crooner Mr. Forbes (More at #30-Across)
19. Masterpiece-maker's mount
20. Alberta village 45 minutes from Edmonton
22. Geared for rocking
23. Gorges
26. Feats
27. "Angel Eyes" singer Jeff
30. New debut album by #18-Across: '_ Woulda Shoulda'
32. Oscars gr.
33. Awestruck in facial expression
34. Gear
37. Purr alternative
38. Hears, like herald angels
39. Neat
40. "The A-Team" star, _. _
41. Cougars
42. Giver
43. Soldier's uniform part
45. YouTube owner
46. Greek alphabet's 8th letter
48. Short _ (Curt brush-off)
50. Type of mil. mission
51. Away from, say, the manufacturing plant
55. Expect
56. Edge
58. Thought
59. "Wuthering Heights" (1939) star Ms. Oberon
60. Mr. Diggs
61. Tree varieties
62. Crowbar user, say
63. Vesper _, "Casino Royale" (2006) character
64. Seven, in Sherbrooke

DOWN
1. Editor's 'let it stand'
2. "I'm _ You": Avril Lavigne hit
3. 'A' in AD
4. Almond paste is an ingredient in this 'wild' pastry: 2 wds.
5. Furniture retailer with stores across Canada
6. All in _ _ work
7. Puny parasite
8. Private Investigator, e.g.
9. Vintage sewing machine foot peddle
10. Squeezed the orange on the kitchen gadget
11. It's when the talker talks as if everything is a question?
12. Forested
13. Carries
21. "_ Leaving Home" by The Beatles
24. Mark _: Shania Twain duettist on "Party for Two"
25. Drenches
27. Jon of "Mad Men"
28. 'E' of ER, briefly
29. Glass _ jars (Cotton ball holders, perhaps)
31. Parcel delivery co.
33. Willie of "Eight Is Enough"
35. Seacrest's show, split
36. Car wheel, British-spelling style
38. Buzz
39. Canadian footwear brand since the 1940s, Tender _
41. Horticultural holder
42. Politely tip one's hat
44. Star: French
45. Talented
46. The _, Charlie Chaplin's persona
47. Woodcutter
49. _-Noranda, Quebec
52. Laze
53. Office helper, commonly
54. The Middle _
56. Ocean, e.g.
57. James _ (Canadian body of water)

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
Put all doubts and fears out of your mind and do what you think is best. You have a clear picture of what needs to be done and the courage to make it happen. Don't hesitate.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
As communications planet Mercury moves in your favour today you won't be in the least bit shy or tongue-tied. Let others know what it is you need and they will give it.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
If you need to make a new start now is the time to speak up and let others know what it is you intend to do — and that your intentions are serious. But don't get so serious that you forget how to have fun.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
You know that you have what it takes to succeed but others may need some convincing. You'll find it easier to persuade colleagues and employers, just remember that actions count more than words.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Go your own way and do your own thing. And don't worry about others — the best way to win them over is to act like their approval means nothing to you.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Someone will deliver unexpected news today but you should have seen it coming. No matter how much it might upset you just accept it and move on. What else can you do?

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
There is someone you should be seeing more of and this is the ideal time to ring them up and arrange to get together again. Don't drift apart so easily in future.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
You have overlooked a small but important detail and the effects of that oversight will become apparent. Do not blame others for your failure. Be big enough to own your mistakes.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
For too long you've kept your aims and ambitions to yourself — let everyone know what you want and what you're doing to get it. Most people will be supportive. The few who are not you can safely ignore.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
The doubts and fears of the past few weeks will fade away today as Mercury moves into your sign. The things you have been most anxious about will turn out to be the things you had least to fear.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Put principle before profit and don't worry if you seem to be the only one who cares. Others do care but few get as emotionally involved as you.

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
Difficult choices concerning your career will have to be made but don't do anything before you have consulted people you trust. It could be they can suggest less painful ways of making the changes you need.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

								5
	3		6		4			
9			3		2			
	1		9	4			3	
	7						9	
	4			3	5		6	
			4		9			8
			8		7		4	
2								

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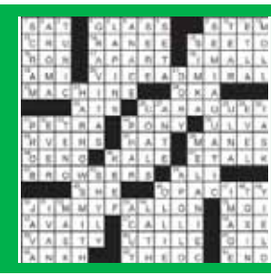

3	2	5	8	1	6	7	4	9
4	6	8	7	3	9	1	2	5
1	7	9	4	2	5	3	6	8
9	4	7	6	8	3	2	5	1
5	1	6	2	7	4	9	8	3
8	3	2	9	5	1	4	7	6
7	5	1	3	6	2	8	9	4
6	8	4	1	9	7	5	3	2
2	9	3	5	4	8	6	1	7

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